HARAMBEE FLAME!

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural exchange is germane to human growth.

EDITORIAL

Recently, on a local(Omaha, NE) public-affairs television program, the two African guests fielded questions about Bush's nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. Toward the end of the program, the question was raised as to whether the fact that Thomas is married to a Caucasian is an issue in the African community. One of the guests, a supporter of Thomas and, like Thomas, a conservative Republican, expressed uncertainty about whether the nominee's marriage to a Caucasian was an issue in Omaha's African community. The other guest disagreed but insisted that the matter should not be an issue. Both maintained that Thomas' choice of a marriage partner has no place in a discussion about the nominee's fitness to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court.

What's love got to do with it? We are well aware of the fact that most African people in this country who are married are married to other African people. Likewise, we know that the fact that an African man or woman has an African spouse means little with respect to the question of whether that man or woman has any sense of his or her African identity, has practically no bearing on whether that man or woman feels a sense of loyalty to African people, and otherwise has no apparent correlation to the kind of mind-set the person operates from. Spouses, like clothes, jobs, and other components of people's lives, don't necessarily tell us much, by themselves, about who a person is.

Let's stay with the matter of clothes for a moment. There are those who would say that the so-called "race" of one's spouse has no more to do with who a person really is than the style of clothes a person wears. But let us imagine that a man wears a football jersey. We ask that man about the jersey and he tells us that he wears it just as a matter of personal preference, that he simply likes the style. But then, as we speak further with the man, we discover that he has extensive

knowledge of the game of football, that he has had personal experience in playing the game. Later, we happen to be watching television and, lo and behold, we see that this man is a starter for the Los Angeles Rams. It becomes clear to us, then, that his habit of wearing a football jersey is not simply a matter of his liking the style of football jerseys. This man is, afterall, a football-player! As a football-player, he identifies with the game and is a part of it.

Clarence Thomas, in having a Caucasian spouse, is like the football-player in that, just as the latter just doesn't happen to like football jerseys, Clarence just doesn't happen to like his Caucasian spouse(or Caucasian women in general, for that matter). Clarence speaks from the Caucasian's perspective and actively promotes the interests of the system of Caucasian supremacy. He is a player in the game of maintaining that supremacy at the expense of African people. So his having a Caucasian wife is not a matter of happenstance. That woman is his uniform. If Clarence Thomas supports the interests of ruling Caucasians, it makes all the sense in the world that he would be married to a Caucasian woman. Does it strike us as strange that a man or woman would wear the uniform of his or her occupation?

In the past several weeks, we've witnessed a number of skirmishes regarding the upcoming movie on Malcolm X, which is to be directed by Spike Lee--Shooting of the film has already begun. The combatants have been, on one side, Spike Lee and, on the other, Amiri Baraka and company, who submitted an open letter to Spike and to various organs of the media in which the ability of Spike Lee to direct this film on Malcolm was questioned.

Among the reasons cited by Baraka and others for their lack of confidence in Spike are: the alleg-

ed proliferation of caricatures of African people in his films to date, the fact that Spike has received somewhere between 25 and 40 million dollars in funding from Caucasian-controlled Hollywood--he who pays the piper calls the tune, and something that might be interpreted as a supposed ideological defect on the young director's part. For the most part, Spike hasn't had a great deal to say about all this other than to insist that, as an artist, he is not going to be dictated to by others as to his art. Other folks have been more vocal, staunchly defending Spike against his detractors by pointing to the quality of the films he has directed, supporting his right to exercise his creativity and interpretive power in the Malcolm film project, and questioning where Baraka and company were when the upcoming film was to be directed by a Caucasian.

Being in prison, I haven't had the opportunity to see more than two of Lee's movies--"Do The Right Thing" and "She's Gotta Have It." Based on my viewing of these two films and reading and listening to numerous interviews of the young African, I don't have any serious questions about his ability to do justice on screen to Malcolm. I do have questions, as any of us should, about how much control he will have as director and about whether the financial success Spike has had thus far and might derive from this film will negatively affect him as he weighs the factor of his own integrity against the factor of the "bottom line" and the interests of those who hold the purse strings.

But whatever the degree to which Baraka's and others' concerns about Spike's ability to "properly" direct this film on Malcolm are valid or unjustified, genuine or rooted in ego-related pettiness, it may be that we are failing to look at a crucial issue--the growing popularity in this society of the public trashing of one's friends, colleagues, or family members. As important a historical figure as Malcolm is to us, we have every right to guard against anyone of us tracking the mud of falsehood or distortion upon his memory. And if

Amiri Baraka and company did have private conversations with Spike Lee, or if one of them did, and respectfully expressed reservations and concluded such conversations with those reservations intact, then they certainly were justified in going public. But unless there were such conversations and Spike gave his questioners no respect or otherwise gave them real reason to believe that he would sell us out, Baraka and company had no right to publicly attack Spike Lee.

This attack on Spike falls in the pattern set by Abernathy's assault on the character of Martin Luther King in WHEN THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN and continued by the recent tell-all interviews in which La Toya Jackson has trashed members of her family by hanging out for public view their dirty(to whatever degree the dirt is real) laundry. Since such trashing/dissing of African people by other Africans is so commonly exhibited on the t.v. show, "Love Connection," we might call this the "love connection syndrome," in which people who should have some love connection make public matters that ought to be kept private.

Of course it can be argued that the issue of whether Spike Lee winds up selling us out in his directing of the Malcolm film is not a private affair. And that argument is sound. However, Spike Lee is part of an African family in America under siege and, as such, he deserves not to have some African persons' ugly thoughts and assumptions about him aired publicly. He is not, or has not shown himself to be, a Colin Powell or Wilson Goode or other African pawn for the interests of the Caucasian Establishment. Such persons' actions beg for public attack.

If an African man and an African woman go out on a "Love Connection" date and one of the two parties proves to be foul of breath or to be living in a tiny apartment or to have raggedy underwear, that is none of America's business. If one African decides to write a book about his or her life

(Cont. on p. 12)

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(parent chapter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, Inc.), is a pan-Africanist newsletter. The FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people, events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any distinctions between African people based solely on place of birth. References in the FLAME to Africans are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter "black" or other terms designating African people. This is our practice because we do not wish to diminish the integrity and authenticity of the articles we excerpt from.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as those of the organization. Generally speaking, all uns igned articles are by the editor, Wopashitwe.. Mondo Eyen we Langa(p.k.a. D. Rice).

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 1200 words, though longer pieces will not be automatically rejected. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics. We are looking for poems which address African folks' lives, the conditions we face, and our struggles to rise above those things which hinder us. Submitted poems should not sacrifice power and beauty for the sake of uniform rhythm and/or rhyme. Send submissions to the editor c/o HARAMBEE FLAME; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE; 68542-2500

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Africans Secure Public T.V. Station In California

"KMTP-TV(Channel 32), only one of two African-American-controlled public television stations in the country, has all the hallmarks of a milestone in local broadcasting. A

"At the moment...It has no studio, only five full-time employees and just enough money in the bank to run the station for three months. But that's about $500,000 more than the Minority Television Project had four months ago, when KQED-TV the Bay area's largest public broadcaster, announced it would give up its fight to maintain control of Channel 32.

"Program director Adam Clayton Powell III stresses that the station will be aimed at the 2.3 million African-American, Asian-American, Latino and Native American residents of the Bay area, as well as children, seniors, lesbians and gays, who usually get short shrift from other stations.

"...Much of KMTP's initial programming has come from four minority television consortiums, including the San-Francisco-based National Asian-American Telecommunications Association, funded only last year by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Other groups whose programming is being heavily used are the National Black Programming Consortium and similar groups supplying Native American and Latino programs...

"KMTP got a financial jump start in August from the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency on the condition that it locate its operation in the city's Western Addition, a largely African-American neighborhood where jobs and businesses are in short supply...

"KMTP president Otis McGee--despite an earlier promise made by station lawyer Booker Wade--says that the station will not expand its board of

directors to give local residents a direct say in its management. Community leaders are upset besause KMPT obtained the bulk of its initial funding from redevelopment money that was slated for Western Addition business projects...

"On the other hand, others hope KMTP covers terrain that KQED's management, worried about offending corporate underwriters and upscale tastes, fears to tread. They'd like to see work by independent producers on the labor movement, the Gulf war and other topics KQED-TV, the Bay area's flagship public television station, is reluctant to air..."

-from "Bay Area Gets Black-Run Public TV," page 19, Sept. 25 THE GUARDIAN(N.Y., N.Y.

...

African-On-African Violence By Police In New York

"Black police officers in New York City who use excessive force against members of their own race for some strange reason are trying to emulate their white counterparts, according to a spokesman for the Guardians Association...

"The problem of Black-on-Black violence by police was also noted by Eric Adams, vice-president of the Transit Police Guardians Association...

"Meanwhile, Detective Abel said the Guardians were trying to address the problem through educational programs. 'As soon as a Black candidate passes the exam to become a cop, we try to educate him on what we expect of him', he added.

"Abel said Black-on-Black violence by police has become a nationwide phenomenon. He said this topic dominated a recent conference convened in Newark, N.J., by the National Black Police Association..."

-from "Cops Speak Out Against Black-On-Black Police Violence," page 5, Sept. 21 N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS

Multi-Culturalism In Education Attacked In Britain

"The debate over 'political correctness' and multiculturalism isn't unique to the United States. The fight for a curriculum of inclusion has also been raging in England, where progressive educators and students have been stigmatized as the 'loony left'.

"The 'loony left' tag was invented and applied by the British press in the early 1980s to advocates of a wide variety of progressive educational reforms...Today this media campaign against 'intellectual totalitarianism', 'left fascism and 'anti-white-male-heterosexual' education bears an almost striking resemblance to current U.S. furor over 'political correctness'...

"Suddenly, examples of 'left looniness' were found in all sorts of places. Thus the tabloids rushed to the defense of the 'Golliwog'(a children's doll based on the 'traditional' caricature of a black person) when multiculturalists described it as racist. For the Daily Star, criticism of the doll could only be the work of 'loony left-wingers... out to incite hysteria: about toys which, as the Daily Mail reminded its readers, remain 'enormously popular with children of all colors'. Thus an overtly racist representation of black people was made acceptable on the basis of insult and platitude.

"The 'lunacy' of those challenging traditional images of people of color was reiterated throughout the mid-1980s when Sun, Daily Mail and the Mail on Sunday ran a seemingly endless series of 'strange but true' anti-anti-racist stories. It was alleged that the nursery rhyme 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', along with black garbage bags and all references to black coffee in staff canteens, had been banned by left-wing London educational authorities. Similarly fanciful reports were associated with local councils' plans to 'multiculturalize' London street names. The Sun reported that

Hackney Council, in east London, was going to transform Britannia Walk to Shaheed-E-Azam Nhagot Singh Avenue.

"None of these stories had much basis in fact and some were, very occasionally, followed by retractions. However, they succeeded in creating an atmosphere of intense public hostility to the 'trendy' educationalists now seen to be teaching Britain's youth to despise 'British culture'..."

-from "How Britain's 'Loony Left' Lost The Multiculturalism Fight," page 14, Sept. 25 THE GUARDIAN

Suit On Attica Massacre Finally To Be Heard

..."U.S. District Judge John T. Elfvin has set a Sept. 30 start for the long-delayed trial of the inmates' claims against four former state officials who played key roles at the prison 20 years ago.

"Former Attica warden Vincent Mancusi and former deputy warden Karl Pfeil are the only ones still alive...

"The suit blames Mancusi and Pfeil for the abuse that inmates suffered at the hands of corrections officers after authorities had regained control of the prison...

"Elizabeth Fink, a lawyer for the inmates, said... the state would be required to pay any judgement against the ex-officials since the suit concerned their acts while in office.

"The damages would be paid to the 1,281 inmates who were in the prison's yard when the police opened fire...

"The case is the only remaining unresolved lawsuit from Attica. Two inmates and the heirs of five

others won a total of $1.3 million, plus interest, in 1989 from a state court that ruled excessive force was used during the retaking.

"Most of the dead hostages' cases were settled through the workers' compensation system...

"Elfvin dismissed several of the original defendants from the case, without ruling on whether they did anything wrong, because the inmates' had not served papers on them properly...

"The case nearly fell apart at the end of the 1970s when the inmates' original lawyers found it to be too big to handle. It was then that Smith(former Attica prisoner) pleaded with Elfvin not to throw the case out of court. The inmates hired new lawyers, including Fink, in 1981 and Elfvin permitted them to continue pressing their suit...

"Elfvin, in a ruling in July, said delays caused by the inmates 'can only be said to have been equaled, if not surpassed, by the defendants' skilled delaying tactics'..."

-from "Twenty Years Later, Inmates' Lawsuit Finally Comes To Court," page 7, Sept. 18-24 THE CITY SUN(Brooklyn, N.Y.)

Africentrism In Atlanta

..."Florence Jackson Academy...utilizes the 'African-center' approach to modify the process of miseducation. This approach refers to the educational technology that builds on our culture, history, learning lifestyles and frame of reference that the traditional public school system refuses to offer. FJA empowers youth with skills that develop independent, creative, and critical thinking along with self-esteem...

"This past summer Harambee Sasa Conscious Child-

ren Center merged forces with Florence Jackson Academy to continue the fight for alternative education. Harambee represents the preschool segment of the academy...

"FJA's basic academic curriculum offers a variety of language/communications skills, reading readiness, computational skills, and self-reliance skills. Plus African history and culture, the arts, and physical development, science, math and technology along with health, hygienge and nutrition...

"All meals and snacks served are completely vegetarian. This menu is designed to promote good health and healthy eating habits. This diet is low in fat, non-dairy, low in sodium, and sugar free..."

-from "Choosing An Alternative Route," page 12, Sept. 21-27 THE ATLANTA VOICE(Atlanta, GA)

African War Resistor Faces Sept. 30 Hearing

"When Tahan Jones was 17, joining the Marine Corps Reserves seemed like a good way to get an education and ensure his future. Four years later, his view of the world had changed so much that he refused to serve during the Gulf war and applied for a conscientious objector discharge from the Marines. Today...the 21-year-old Jones faces desertion charges that could mean up to seven years in prison...Jones' court-martial process begins Sept. 30, when the Marines will hold his Article 32 hearing, a military version of a grand jury hearing, to determine the precise charges against him. After that, the trial could begin immediately--or may not be held for months...Mail may be sent to Cpl. Tahan K. Jones(564-43-9553), Bldg. 8, H-1, Wing A, 2nd MEB, Sub-unit 1, MCB, Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville, NC 28542."

-from "War Resistor Won't Kill For An Education," page 5, Oct. 2 THE GUARDIAN

and include in it the fact that he or she did some illegal things with his or her partners, the names of those partners are none of America's business. If two Africans or two groups of Africans have a disagreement, they owe it to themselves and each other to attempt to resolve their conflict as privately as possible and not permit the conflict to be exploited by Caucasians for their own purposes or to be use by Caucasians for their own amusement.

Don't those who are dissing Spike Lee in advance of the completion of the film understand that the more the Caucasian producers of the project are enabled to believe that Spike is lacking in support from African people, the less leverage the Brother will have in haggling with those who have every reason to want to create a trivialized Malcolm? And if they really believe Spike can't do Malcolm justice with Caucasian money, then they ought to help Spike raise some African money--some Michael Jordan money, some Oprah Winfrey money, some mo' money, mo' money, mo' money.

Talk is cheap. Bad-mouthin' can be bad business.

-Editor

MILES DAVIS
(1926-1991)

THE SETS

the young ones how did they get them
the ak-47s
the uzis
the street-sweepers
whose hand delivered them
our young ones how did they get it
the idea
the nigger instilled in them
non-people whose blood can spill
endlessly without significance
whose mouth spoke such words to them
so that they see life on kleenex
after blowing their noses
clearing their throats of phlegm

the colors how did they get them
whose brush painted with treacherous stroke
a red or blue
or other arbitrary hue
marking lives for death
on a canvas of enemy turfs
framed in shrugging
self-hating shoulders
bearing pastels of despair.

Mondo

KKK

BACK IN TIME

In Birmingham, Alabama, the condition of the colored schools has long been a shame. At last in order to get a large bond issue of three million dollars, the best white citizens solemnly promised to spen five hundred thousand dollars upon the Negro schools. They proposed to put up a Negro high school to cost three or four hundred thousand dollars and one large primary school. They had, however, as principal of the colored high school a Negro tool and lickspittle. He assured them that the colored people didn't need any school as costly as they proposed. He asked for a straggling one-story building with a little brick and a great deal of stucco and at a cost of about half what they had proposed to spend. He achieved a partly finished high school.

-W.E.B. DuBois, 1924; Source: THE EDUCATION OF BLACK PEOPLE: TEN CRITIQUES, 1906-1960

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Black Women's Alliance Assn. has established an "Adopt-An-Inmate" program. The Association states: "We receive hundreds of letters from inmates who express their concern about the critical gap between Black men and women. We send them information about the organization and the Black problems. They request also pen-pals--not only women, but other men and senior citizens. We cannot throw their letters away; instead, we must pass them on to other organizations. For this reason, we are asking you to contact your local churches to see if they will take these letters. Since we seem to hear only from inmates who are articulate and are enrolled in schools and/or vocational programs; some women, especially, single heads of families, might be able to meet sincere inmates who would be assets to them when they are released."

Those churches and other organizations that are interested in participating in this program and would like more information about it and/or other programs being conducted by the Black Women's Alliance Assn. should contact the association at 8306 Wilshire Blvd., Suite #967; Beverly Hills, CA 90211.

An emergency conference on "black independent politics" is scheduled to be held at the Howard Inn in Washington, D.C. Nov. 22-24. The meeting will be headed by nationally syndicated New York talk-show host, Bob Law. The initial list of organizers includes Howard U. political scientist Ron Walters; Janice Graham of the West Palm Beach, Florida organization, Our Common Ground; Jitu Weusi of the N.Y.-based African Americans United for Political Power; and others. Topics will include the current state of politics and the crises in African communities in the U.S., independent program for the '92 elections, etc. Call (407) 845-2670 for additional information.

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